

via pacis

The voice of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community

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KEEPING THE DOORS OPEN IN A YEAR OF RECOVERY

by Julie Brown

It is time once again for us to express our deepest thanks to all the volunteers and donors who make the work of the Des Moines Catholic Worker possible and humbly ask for another year of support in what has always been appropriately called our “yearly beg letter.”

The year end update is generally themed around change. This year is no different. We have seen change that came as a constant slow burn at times and crashing waves at others, from community changes to new guests and volunteers.

Some things have, thankfully, stayed the same. With the help of many volunteers and donors, our main hospitality house has remained open to serve meals through another devastating year of this pandemic.

In a kitchen sized for a single family home, we prepare roughly 600-750 pounds of hot food each week. Some among us create fabulous meals with flavor, spices, and skill, while others prepare meals with deep love.

Our guests are gracious when a pot gets scorched or a potato is under-cooked, and for that we are blessed. We distribute this abundance, along with hot coffee, desserts, and boxes filled with groceries, fresh produce, and meat through the north-side window of Dingman House, an old victorian on Indiana Avenue.



Ray Blase, the St. Vincent DePaul of Ankeny, continues to raise money from friends and old fellow Dowling High School 1969 classmates to buy us meat.



Eddie, Carla Dawson, and Norman. Carla recently visited from New York City, where she now lives with JoAnne Kenedy and Carmen Trotta th the Catholic Worker (all former Des Moines Catholic Workers!).



Des Moines Catholic Worker community celebrating Lily's birthday in June. Back row (left to right): Jenny, Monty, Araceli, Frieda, Lashon, Eddie Front row (left to right): Lily, Norman, Jean

We often rely on a network of meal providers to make the second meal of the day at six 'o'clock p.m. Unfortunately, many of these meal providers have not been able to provide since the pandemic started, so we are always looking for families or groups to pitch in. Our guests really appreciate the extra care and variety that goes into food cooked by monthly meal providers.

A quick walk to the south side of Dingman House is our “store room” window. Here, folks can ask for whatever they need, and if we have it, it's theirs, from razors and deodorant to groceries, blankets, or playing cards. This is my favorite part about the

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45 YEARS AND COUNTING

by Frank Cordaro

On August 23, 1976, the Des Moines Catholic Worker opened its doors for the first time. Myself and two close friends, Joe DaVia and Ed Polish, began offering room and board to families and women at Berrigan house. Accommodations for workers were sparse back then: Joe and I doubled up on a bunk bed in one of the three second floor bedrooms, and Ed lived next to the furnace in the basement. This was the first of many Des Moines Catholic Worker communities to come. It was also the smallest. Over the years, we've gained five new members per year. People usually stay here for only two years before moving on, however, so the hands which do the work are constantly changing. In a real sense, we are not a 45 year old community; we have been 45 different communities over the last 45 years.

These pandemic months have not been easy on the Des Moines Catholic

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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THE DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

The Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, founded in 1976, is a response to the Gospel call to compassionate action as summarized by the Catholic Worker tradition. We are committed to a simple, nonviolent lifestyle as we live and work among the poor. We directly serve others by opening the Dingman House as a drop-in center for those in need of food, clothing, toiletries, use of a phone, toilet, shower, or just a cup of coffee and conversation. We also engage in activities that advocate social justice.

BECOMING A DES MOINES CATHOLIC WORKER

We are open to new community members. For information about joining our mission, contact any community member or send an email to dmccatholicworker@gmail.com.

MAILING ADDRESS

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Des Moines IA 50305

BISHOP DINGMAN HOUSE

(Drop-in Center and Business Phone)
1310 7th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-214-1030

Hospitality Hours:

Monday and Wednesday: CLOSED

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday: 3-6:30pm
(meals at 3pm and 6pm)

Saturday: 12-2pm (meal at 12pm)

PHIL BERRIGAN HOUSE

713 Indiana Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50314

RACHEL CORRIE HOUSE

1301 8th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314

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As for ourselves, we must
be meek, bear injustice,
malice, and rash judgment.
We must turn the
other cheek, give up our
cloak, go a second mile.
-Dorothy Day



I Am From

by Austin C. Cook

I am from the love of parents
From warm hugs and warm smiles
And warm peanut butter toast in the morning

I am from 66th street
From riding bikes, skateboarding,
And peeing on trees

I am from the farm
From riding on top of three-wheelers,
Horses,
And my older cousins’ backs
From sloppy joes and potato chips
From “chocolate is a vegetable”
And home-made ice cream licks

I am from atop the bunk bed
My older brother below
With questions, curiosities, and wits aglow

I am from pick-up sports
Double or nothin’,
Football,
And kangaroo

I am from lonely walks home
From despairing purposelessness and pain
Feelings of
Abandonment and loss

I am from the love of Jesus
Who showed me God is with me
Even on a God-forsaken cross

I am from healing
Through a high schooler preaching
“Your menial life means more
Than you are believing”

I am from dreams of professional baseball
To “business, I guess”
To “here’s food, hygiene, and socks. God bless!”

I am from the Black Sheep
From “catchin’ some rays” under
Silent city lights
From Smash Bros Brawl and four square
That could end in fights
Or soul-searching talks
And brotherly advice

I am from the Moody Chorale
From Chicago, Canada, Romania, Budapest
From hugs, naps, sweat, tears
And new friendships that felt like years
Where God’s Word is a candle
And love is the key
And “a song is a beautiful thing.”

I am from the Des Moines Catholic Worker
From Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day
Where it’s a race to the bottom
And service is the game
From eating roasted groundhog and drinking hard tea
And you’ve got to believe in order to see

I am from surrender to the will of God
Relations, vocations, self-centered temptations
To give my life at the call
-I pray-
to God
my all in all.

August 6th and 9th Report

by Frank Cordaro

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the state can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie."

-Joseph Goebbels

Des Moines Catholic Workers, Ed Bloomer and Frank Cordaro, maintained two eight-hour vigils on August 6th and 9th from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon at the entrance of the Iowa Air Guard base. This vigil was our fifth annual remembrance of the United States' atomic bombing of Japan.

The connection between the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Drone Command Center is direct and should be obvious.

All empires live on lies. The first casualty of all wars is the truth. Victory in war is a prerequisite for being an empire. But all empires eventually fall.

This year marks the 76th anniversary of the United States atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The lie we told ourselves was that these war crimes won the war and saved American and Japanese lives. We baby boomers did not make up this lie, but we lived it and created our current post-WWII empire based upon it.

Seventy-six years later, we are seeing in multiple ways the consequences of this lie. We live in a PRP-rich, pro-war, and pro-empire nation hell-bent on destroying life on the planet! The state is losing its grip because it can no longer shield us from the political, economic, and/or military consequences of our post-WWII A-bombing lie.



From left to right, Fr. Dave Polich, Eloice Granke, Eddie Bloomer, and Rev. Chet Guinn call on the United States to take accountability for its past war crimes at the Iowa Air Guard Command Center entrance.

These problems are local. In Iowa we have embraced global corporate industrial agriculture, destroying the planet and enslaving us to its mass-produced food. In the business of war-making, Des Moines plays its part with daily murders committed at the Air National Guard Drone command center. None of our national moral leadership (religious or otherwise), seems to care!

On any given day, at any given time, someone at that base is hunting down our so-called enemies anywhere on the planet, killing them from the sky! This is the same "license to kill" we gave ourselves in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The same reasoning is used as well: "to save lives and keep the peace."

Thank you to Father David Polich, Eloise Cranke, and Rev. Chet Guinn who joined us in our vigil. Also thanks to my brother, Joe, who lives a couple blocks away from the base. Joe was our support person, keeping Ed and me supplied with water, food, and bathroom breaks when needed.

Carmen Trotta, former Des Moines Catholic Worker and Grinnell graduate, is free! After serving six months in federal prison following the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 Action, Trotta was released early from his 14 month sentence in May.



Join Frank, Eddie, and Norman every Saturday at 4p.m. for an hour-long vigil at the Iowa Air Guard Drone Command Center!

Cooking for the Neighborhood

by Frieda Bequeaith

My time at the Catholic Worker began in the early summer of 2020 and led to me moving into Berrigan House a year later. One of my favorite aspects of the work has been serving hot meals to our guests and eating with my fellow Workers. It has reminded me that cooking for a large group of people is so much more efficient, and more meaningful, than for oneself or one's household.

Sometimes we cook these meals in-house using donated food or food bought in bulk. Sometimes these meals are donated by a group of people who cooked together, or by several individuals who provide different parts of the meal. Whatever the method, it's apparent that cooking for a large group of people and sharing that food for free is much easier, and cheaper, than we often think.

First, it's a great way to feel connected. Prepping and cooking food with your friends is fun! If you don't have friends, it's an easy way to make some. It's a bonding experience. Even washing dishes can be enjoyable when you have company. Plus, in a group, you can rotate this task so the labor is evenly dispersed. Everybody wants a revolution, but nobody wants to do the dishes, right? Problem solved.

Second, it's aggressively cheaper to feed a large sum of people, especially when you are cooking with plant-based ingredients. Finding free produce is typically an easy task: look into your local community gardens and food banks, or find food rescue programs with grocery stores near you. Buy some bulk grains and legumes, and you've got a great meal going.

For example, 25 pounds of bulk lentils for \$12 means you could cook 30 cups of lentils for \$2.40 (25 lbs dry = 175 cups cooked). Fifty pounds of bulk rice for \$20 means you could cook 72 cups of rice for \$1.97 (50 lbs uncooked = 300 cups cooked). That's roughly \$4 to make 75 servings of food. You could feed 75 people for \$4. Think about how much we spend on groceries for ourselves or families on a monthly basis!

When I envision a world beyond capitalism, I imagine lots of people coming together to cook food for their neighborhoods. I imagine this happening everywhere, not just at so-called "not for profits." I imagine this being the norm, a regular occurrence in communities all over. We could battle food insecurity and food deserts, save money, help consistently feed the unhoused, and build communal structures that allow us less reliance on money and capitalism to meet our collective needs.

In case this task still seems daunting, here's a recipe to get you started. Grab a group of friends, neighbors, co-workers, or acquaintances, and cook for your neighborhood this week:

Lentil & Rice Soup
Feeds: 50

Ingredients:

9 lbs dry rice

3 lbs dry lentils

1 cup potatoes, raw, cubed

1 cup chopped onions

2 cups celery, diced

2 cups carrots, chopped

Spices: anything! Garlic, parsley, cumin, salt, and pepper are recommended.

Instructions:

-Cook the rice using a 2:1 water to rice ratio.

-Rinse lentils and drain well.

-Combine lentils and 23 cups of water in a large pot. Boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until lentils are just tender, about 12 minutes.

-Add vegetables and spices. Simmer, uncovered, about 50 minutes.

-Portion 1/2 cup of soup over 1/2 cup of rice.



Group photo at the Sugar Creek Catholic Worker Retreat
Photo by Mary Farrell

Investing Like the King

by Austin Cook

Since moving into the Worker, I have been wrestling with what to do with my money. Before I moved in, a friend kindly helped me set up a Roth IRA, and there's money I could invest. My high school business teacher once explained that if we start investing early, say at age eighteen, into certain funds, we could easily be millionaires. I want to invest my money like Jesus invested his. How did the eternal Word of the Father invest his riches? Through time in prayer, scripture, and contemplation, Jesus has taught me three things about money I would be honored to share with you. I learned that: 1) Jesus became poor so we could become rich; 2) he calls his disciples to give up money to enrich the poor as well; 3) he promises that our heavenly

Father will provide our necessities as we seek to obey. I want to invest my money like Jesus invested his. Below, I trace my thoughts as I sought what it means for me to invest with Jesus as my guide.

Jesus gave up his riches and became poor to make us rich. He had infinite access to infinite means in heaven, but Jesus did not see his status as something to be used for his own advantage. He humbled himself, became a servant, and served others unto death. Paul describes Jesus' grace like this: "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). Jesus transferred all his heavenly riches out of his account to enrich us, and we should follow his lead. Based on this passage, if I find myself with riches, I have the opportunity to follow Jesus by generously giving my riches to those in need until I become in need. A financial planner might deem this strategy foolish, but sometimes we experience the foolishness of God as wiser than the wisdom of the wise. Jesus, one with the Father, possessor of all wisdom, made the financial decision to pour out his riches and become poor in order to enrich us. Jesus became homeless and poor; it enabled him to uplift the poor and be in solidarity with them, for the poor know best how to help the poor.

Jesus calls his disciples to poverty too. The theme of giving up possessions for the poor is all throughout the book of Luke, but Jesus lays it out clearer than ever in 14:33: "None of you can be my disciple who does not give up all your possessions." Honestly, this teaching scares me. Money means power, and I fear powerlessness. I fear being at the mercy of others. I fear that if I have a family, I may not be able to provide food, water, clothing, and shelter. I fear the unknown crisis that pushes me out of a house and into the hard, cold streets, at the mercy of others. If worse comes to worst, I could die! But Jesus says, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold



Austin and long-time volunteer, Charlie Mertes, take a much needed break from sweating in the kitchen to assemble a new picnic table.

for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father's care. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt 10:28-31). I don't fear being at the mercy of the God who loves me. Ultimately, I am at his mercy.

I have divulged my fears with most folks at the Catholic Worker and received sage advice. Eddy simply asks, "Have you considered the lilies?" It reminds me of Jesus' encouragement to disciples facing my same fears. Lilies neither toil nor spin, yet our heavenly Father clothes them with more glory than the richest kings. The birds don't reap or gather into barns like farmers, yet our heavenly Father feeds them. How much more will he take care of us, his children? Jesus exhorts, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the nations who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matt 6:31-32). Jesus concludes, "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt 6:33).

What does this mean for me? It means instead of investing in Roth IRAs, 401Ks, and other retirement funds in hopes of gaining a great return on my investments and offering those generously to the poor fifty years down the road, I invest two dollars to give someone a bus ride right now. I invest my time in feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner, and welcoming the stranger, and I anticipate the earnings on my investment in human contentment and relationships.

I want to follow Jesus, the one who left his dwelling with the Father to be with the poor and make them rich. I want to do the same. God is the only one to fear, and he loves and cares for me more than I know. He will provide. There's no need to worry. I pray - and I ask you to pray - God helps me to follow Jesus.

“You Gotta Have Gutz!”

by Julie Brown

“I have been in prison for a year and still have never spoken to a lawyer!” Those were the words Omar Barushki screamed as he was hauled from the courtroom in Iraqi Kurdistan on July 9, 2021.

After almost a year of the United States holding my passport, I recently made my way back to Kurdistan from the Des Moines Catholic Worker. Leaving was bittersweet. My best friend, Jess, was due to be sentenced, and good-byes are always hard. We don’t do those.

Once I got to Kurdistan, I did my best to compartmentalize the anger of the United States court system and how our community will be forever changed. Little did I know, I was diving into a scenario of courtrooms, defendants, and families whose lives are also forever changed.

Seventy-six activists and journalists were arrested over the past year in Iraqi Kurdistan. All of them were speaking out against government corruption. They are now being charged with crimes such as espionage and attempting to form an armed group to overthrow the government. In reality, they were all very vocal about the government’s nonpayment of salaries to its employees, spoke with international consulates and peace organizations, and led a nonviolent street movement. This group is known as the “Badinan Prisoners” because the first arrested were from the Badinan region in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Five of the original activists have already been sentenced to six years and have lost their appeal. Christian Peacemaker teams have been following the cases and managed access to the closed courtroom. Attending the trial of Omed Barushki and Badal Berwari was the first thing I did when I arrived to work with the Kurdistan team in Iraq.

What I witnessed was a sham of a court with the defendants held in cages in the courtroom. One-hundred percent of the witnesses brought in by the prosecution to testify against the

defendants said they were forced to sign confessions and that they are not witnesses. One person said, “All I am witness to is that these are innocent men!” One witness pointed at the security council and shouted, “This is not my confession! They beat me and forced me to sign this!” After not having sufficient witnesses for the side of the prosecution, the case was adjourned and the defendants were sent back to prison.

That night after the trial, I was thinking about how shocking it was that this could happen. Activists are being charged of espionage for telling consulates that the government wasn’t paying their salaries. I almost felt a bit of United States exceptionalism! Then I remembered that my best friend in the United States was being charged with terrorism.

The big “T”... certainly not how anyone would label Jessica Reznicek. I experience her as someone who loves laughing, animals, nature, good coffee and God. She hates to see people in pain, even strangers, and will give you her backpack if you are crying, in hopes of brightening your day, then haul her stuff around in a plastic sack for a week. Yet, the government and big oil corporations needed an example. I guess they got it.

In all of this, I am reflecting on true strength to make the world a better place, and also the faith to walk forward in a situation that really has only one outcome: you in a cage. I had a friend who used to love to hop trains, and she would say, “You gotta have gutz.” Guts with a “z.” I think that Jess, the Badinan activists, water defenders, and the plowshares activists have the “z” in spades.

For more on the Badinan Activists, follow Christian Peacemaker Teams - Iraqi Kurdistan Facebook page. To support Jessica Reznicek, follow “Free Jessica” on Facebook.



“I was very concerned that the Dakota Access Pipeline would be traveling through this region. We can’t really stand the chance of an oil spill in Des Moines. These are not theoretical things that might happen. The Bakken system leaked eight times in 2017, resulting in the spilling of five thousand gallons of crude oil into our nation’s natural resources. These are not things that might happen. These are things that did happen. We’re just witnessing these industries destroying life around us, and for what?”

- Jessica Reznicek

Update on Jessica!

by Monty

Jessica Reznicek is currently serving an eight year prison sentence for actions she took to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. A “terrorism enhancement” more than doubled her sentence, and she has been ordered to pay over \$3 million in restitution. This is the criminalization of environmental protection!

Inspired by Indigenous leadership of the NODAPL movement at Standing Rock, Jess took a stand against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline in Iowa in 2016. She and a fellow Catholic Worker disabled construction machinery and the pipeline itself. No one was injured by their actions, and the land was protected from the flow of oil for an additional four months.

Since she began serving her sentence in Waseca, Minnesota, Jessica has started learning piano. She plans on joining the dog training program and finishing her college degree through a mail correspondence program. Jessica spends as much time outside as she can (usually one to two hours a day) and has befriended a couple of incarcerated people from the Standing Rock reservation. She has expressed a lot of gratitude for all the support and the letters she has received since being inside.

Biden’s Department of Justice

continues to pursue terrorism charges against protestors across the country. We are this aware of the dangerous precedent and are working to appeal Jessica’s sentencing and get the terrorism enhancement removed. What happens to Jessica happens to all of us! Please join the growing network of groups and individuals who have signed on to support Jessica and tell the world that protecting water is not terrorism! So far, over nine thousand individuals have signed on, along with over eighty groups, including 350.org, Rainforest action network, Veterans for Peace, Code Pink, and Sunrise.

Please get a t-shirt and sign our petition!

Petition:

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protecting-water-is-never-terrorism-repeal-jessica-rezniceks-terrorist-enhancement>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/freejessrez/>

Website: supportjessicareznicek.com

Organizational Sign up: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQsZxOa-twFJBCaFQ9NAjPbKaQ6FpT2cHQyVHjdsu-hFpZZjOQ/viewform>

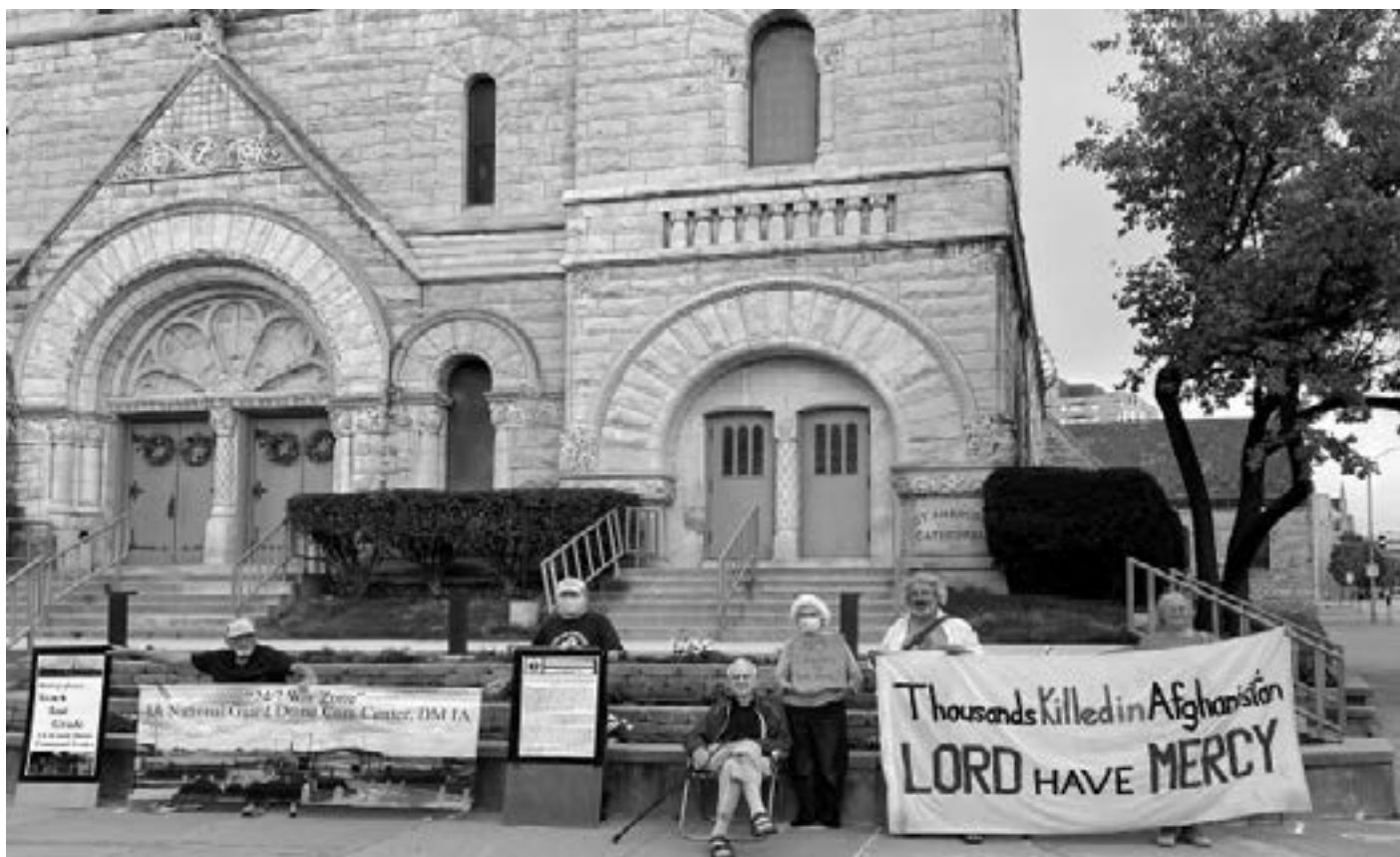
October 7th Drone Vigil

by Frank Cordaro

Seven people showed up at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa for an hour-long vigil at 11 a.m. on October 7th for the national “Call to Action: A Day of Atonement” for twenty years of United States-led armed drone war.

Des Moines was one of fifteen cities participating in the event, which took place at places of worship around the nation. In a Ban Killer Drones Network news release on September 24th, spokesperson Kathy Kelly said, “We will gather at places of worship at 11 a.m. to call for a real end to the twenty years of United States terror against the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. We urge a ban on weaponized drones and an end to any ‘over the horizon’ air-strikes against Afghanistan and any other country. We will also call on our religious leaders to speak out clearly for peace, ending what has too often been a tragic, enabling silence from faith leaders over the last twenty years.”

In an earlier email to Bishop William Joensen, Diocese of Des Moines, Des Moines Catholic Worker and Des Moines Veterans For Peace representatives, Frank Cordaro and Ed Bloomer, wrote, “We ask you, we implore you, to vocally object to existing plans for



From left to right: Charles Mertens, Ed Bloomer, Rev Chet Guinn (92 yrs), Eloise Granke, Brian Terrell, and Betsy Keenan. Photo by Frank Cordaro.

more drone warfare. We urge you to call for an end of the “over the horizon” assassination plan of our United States government. We beg you to call for the closing of the Iowa Air Guard Drone Command Center in Des Moines.”

For more info on the United States Ban Killer Drones network see web page: <https://bankillerdrones.org/> or contact: Nick Mottern <nickmottern@gmail.com> 914.806.6179

Will We Be Part of the Solution?

by Bob Watson, Veterans For Peace/Rural Advocate

A Letter to the Editor published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on October 3, 2021

It is interesting that industrial ag apologists, whether they be in government, business, or academia, never mention the inherent pollution from industrial ag that will continue to pollute Iowa no matter their hair-brained schemes of green-washing – ag digesters for hog confinements, and now climate-washing – burying carbon dioxide (CO₂) from ethanol plants. And, if these ideas are so good, why are they asking for subsidies from taxpayers?

These are two of the latest bandaids that ag apologists put forth to allow the industrial row crop/confinement/feedlot model of agriculture to continue with its onslaught of pollution to Iowa's water, air, soil, and human health, and its effects on climate. Along with the myth that Iowa feeds the world (Iowa actually imports over 80 percent of its people's food, so if we can't even feed ourselves, how do we feed the world?), ag allies come up with new climate- and green-washing schemes to try to confuse the public into thinking that modern industrial agriculture is actually good for the state and for farmers. It is not good for either, but instead is good for the corporations that don't care what happens to the environment or to farmers as long as they make money.

Why should Iowa be the toilet for the hog confinement industry, leaving us with confinement waste which is made toxic through cooking for months in pits and tanks? That confinement waste pollutes our air, soil, and water and harms human health, all prior to any proposed treatment or ag digesters. In the past, pig manure was deposited directly onto the land. It was broken down into its benign beneficial parts in a few days by sun, wind, water, bugs, and soil organisms and taken up by plants in the nutrient cycle.

Even if carbon dioxide is collected from ethanol plants, Iowa will still have some of the most polluted streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, soil, and air in the United States and will be a major contributor of pollution to the dead zone in the Gulf. This will continue to happen because modern industrial mono-cropping of corn and beans relies on polluting fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and it also results in soil erosion.

There are crops and cropping systems that exist today that can be adopted wholesale by farmers that would make Iowa a source of clean water, a flood mitigating sponge, a soil-building and carbon-sequestering state with a healthy agriculture, growing crops and animals in sustainable and non-polluting ways for both people food and manufacturing goods. This model of agriculture would revitalize and clean up our rural areas making them once again a vibrant place to live, along with manufacturing and processing of healthy agricultural products and food.

Some of these crops and cropping systems can be read about in the epilogue of my co-authored book *Hog Confinements and Human Health: the intersection of science, morals, and law*, which is free to read online at www.civandinc.com (click on “Hog Ebook”).

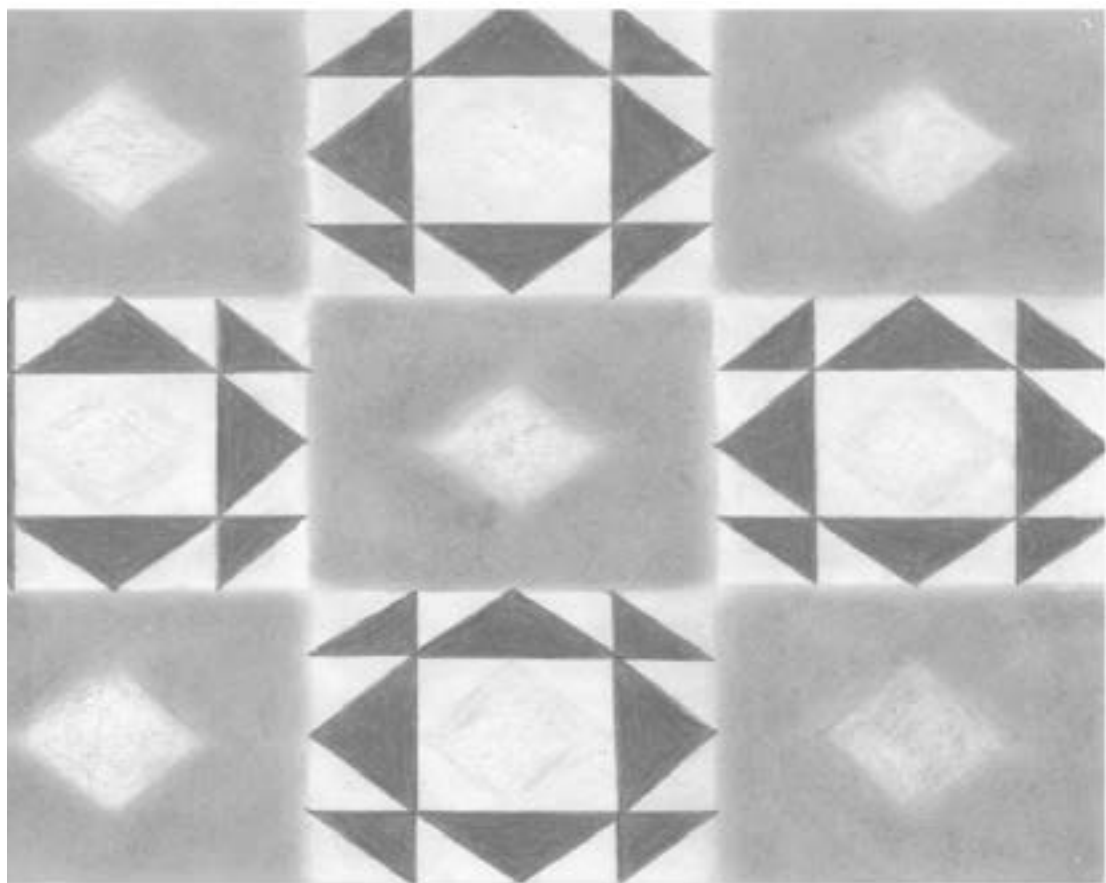
This is Iowa's choice. Will we continue to be one of the existential threats to human life on earth through this industrial model of agriculture now prevalent in Iowa, or, will we be part of the solution to those threats?

Bob Watson
Decorah, Iowa
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563-379-4147

Poetry and Art Corner

Good In You

Don't let the good in you ever begin to fade
For the good in you is the reason alone that you God made
Even if you don't see it, I and many good people can.
So don't ever let anything bring you down
The thought of ever being a mistake
Because that thought alone would give any good man a heartache
You have dreams beyond and goals to achieve
And to accomplish them all I know you will because in you I always believe
I believe in you enough to help get you through
Because the good in you comes from the person built in and from you.
I see the good in you!



Artwork sent in by an anonymous person incarcerated in Iowa. Original color scheme: red triangles, yellow background, peach squares, white diamonds

Rodeo Time

Well, well it's rodeo time once again
All the cowboys young and old come from miles around
Each with the heart of a champion
And an eye for that champion buckle of gold
As they prepare for their rides
This keeps running through his head
He hooks at me once
He hooks at me twice
He'll throw me around like a couple dice
He'll jump way up in the sky
And I'll look at the crowds in their seats below
He'll come down and I'll be overhead bound
Jarring and breaking bones as he hits the ground
I saw that old calf in my dream and I'll swear he laughed at me
But that's ok cause I see him once again
At rodeo time

Written by Coleman Marlow
9-30-2020
Contact the Author:
Coleman Marlow Jr. #6511114
Newton Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 218
Newton, IA 50208

The X-Change

Around 10 a.m., medical clinic receptionist, Carol, is at the desk. She's busy. Patients are sitting about. Her colde, strict, and pitiless self has got me puzzled. Why can't she be different? It's loss. It's got to be loss. What else would hurt so deep? For a while she looks at

what's on the monitor. Carol's eyes go back and forth in a rush. It must be the emails she's reading.

Molly comes through the doorway in a hurry. The energy changes in the room. Since Molly works at the hospital, she's rarely here. Everybody's eyes are on Molly. She's got to feel the weight of them. Carol's disposition has changed. She gets Molly's attention, pulls her mask down, smiles, and says, "Hi." Molly stops what she is doing, pulls her mask down, smiles, and says, "Hello, Carol." It must be a woman's moral code to smile when they don't want to. Men don't do that.

Carol says, "I like your mask. It's cute." What's to be an obligation, Molly retorts the same. They both have designer masks. After reciprocating proprieties, Carol is gleaming. She wants Molly's acceptance. Does Molly care or is she just trying to leave?

This is important to Carol, to make an impression of kindness. Molly exits. Carol is back to her everyday self.

-Wordcraft

Wordcraft is the pen name of a long-term incarcerated person in the Iowa prison system. He wishes to remain anonymous to prevent any repercussions.

*KEEPING THE DOORS OPEN IN A TIME OF RECOVERY,
continued from page 1*

Dingman House. The first time I volunteered, I asked a community member how people signed up to get clothes and groceries. They laughed and said, "We just give it to them!" So that's the scene here. No forms to fill out, no questions asked.

We always have lots to do between cooking meals, greeting guests, and making runs to various grocery stores around town to pick up donated food. We are open five days a week and are volunteer run. Nobody gets a stipend or paycheck, but room and board is provided to everyone who lives here in the community.

The community collectively has four old houses and fourteen people. We live modestly, and when you donate, your contribution is held with care and stewardship.

Utility costs, taxes, and upkeep of the houses and two vans is all done on a budget of about 75,000 dollars a year. That is less than the salary publicly reported by just ONE of our local Des Moines shelter executives.

In order to maintain the Des Moines Catholic Worker, additional upkeep is ongoing and always needed. Some big issues needed to be addressed over the last two years. These projects were in addition to regular operating and utility expenses:

We updated the old wiring in all four houses: \$40,000.

Rachel Corrie House and Berrigan House share a sewage line to the street that needed to be replaced: \$9,800

The commercial stove in Dingman House was falling apart and needed



Sewage line repair is not easy task, and it is sure not cheap either!

replaced: \$4500

We bought two new steel picnic tables for our guests for dining outside: \$2500

Manning House needed work and updates to the basement where public AA meetings are held. Sidewalks, windows, and new doors were installed: \$15,000. An electric lift for the stairs was donated by Fr. Dave Polich: \$5000

The slow road to rehab, or just keeping our houses from falling on our heads, continues. Some projects that we would love to address next are listed below:

The silver maple tree on the south side of Dingman House needs to be removed (estimated cost \$8,500). The second largest limb fell on our neighbor's house. The largest limb is poised to fall on Ding-

man House, so this needs to be addressed soon.

Major basement and foundation work on Berrigan and Corrie Houses is needed.

Holes in ceilings from current or past plumbing issues need repaired in all four houses.

Dingman House kitchen needs a make-over.

Dingman and Manning House's fire escapes are needed.

Landscaping, sidewalks, and porches need repairs.

If you have construction skills to volunteer or could help fundraise for a project, please let us know.

That's the rundown of how finances work in our community. When folks donate, we pay a bill, fix something, or put it in the pot to fund a house repair. Nothing too fancy.

As we end 2021 and look forward to another year, we at the Des Moines Catholic Worker ask for your support. Donors and volunteers are what have sustained our experiment in living out the Works of Mercy and are a vital part of the Des Moines Catholic Worker extended community.

We pray for a day where the world can live in peace and mutual aid, a day when we look out the window of Dingman House, and there is nobody in the food line because all have what they need and what, in justice, is theirs. Until that day of rest, we will continue to learn to use our bodies as tools of peace and justice and welcome you to join us.

In Peace,
Julie Brown

P.S. Frank has passed the task of writing this letter over to me for the first time, so if I messed it up, please be gracious and still donate!



Operation: New Stove was quite a process!

This is what Kingdom Capitalism Looks Like!

“Hello,

I turned 90 this year. Some 65 years ago, a good friend sold me a mutual fund. I had very little to invest, and that has never changed, but I wanted to help my friend. Well, I have never done anything with the fund, and over the decades, it has grown substantially.

Now that it has grown, and I have had no part in its growth, it means I have not earned it. Therefore, because I have not earned it, it is not mine. So, I have cashed it in and am distributing the money to individuals and groups that make good use of it.

Peace,
Harvey Benson”

**Donated \$5000 to the Des Moines Catholic Worker in March 2021*



Artwork by Charles Mertes

45 YEARS AND COUNTING, continued from page 1

Worker community, even by our standards. We are doing some of the best work we've ever done, but we are in serious need of additional community members. Of the sixteen people living in our community at the beginning of the pandemic, five remain: Ed Bloomer, Norman Searah, Annie Patton, Araceli Benitez Moya, and me. While nobody in our community got seriously ill from COVID-19, and everybody living in our houses have been vaccinated, Annie did catch the virus and was quarantined for two weeks with minor symptoms. Everyone else, so far, has managed to test negative!

Currently, Eddie, Norm, Annie, and I live at Manning House. We decided to put the three older, most vulnerable members, Ed (74), Norman (70), and me (70) in Manning House. Later, Annie Patton rejoined the community in her old room at Manning House.

It's good to see Annie's smiling face! She is a welcomed addition to the current three old guys living at Manning. Annie is the face of our window serving efforts, handing out to-go meals and greeting everyone by their first names.

Araceli remains in the attic at Dingman House and is a real godsend! She comes to us from San Cristóbal in Chiapas, Mexico, where her husband Richard Flamer continues his carpentry work. English is her third language. Her first language is Mayan, and her second language is Spanish. She is a natural Catholic Worker, and she is a real asset to the community. Because of her language skills and incredible work ethic, she is particularly helpful to our Spanish-speaking guests.

Since the pandemic, our normal ways of doing hospitality and resistance work have been limited. Serving people with masks and gloves out a window is not the same as inviting people into our house to share a meal, watch TV, and otherwise hang out. Our local campaign to shut down the Des Moines Drone Command Center has been put on hold.

On the other hand, we are extremely proud of the resistance and hospitality work being done out of the Berrigan and Corrie houses. At the Rachel Corrie House, we are housing some very effective local movement organizers. Offering hospitality to our local organizers gives them a supportive place to live so they can work full time fighting for liberation. This is a great use of the Rachel Corrie House, named after a young American activist killed by the state of Israel for standing between an Israeli bulldozer and a Palestinian home. During this past year at the Phil Berrigan House, we housed two itinerant Catholic Workers, Jessica Reznicek and Julie Brown. Julie returned when she was unable to leave the country as a result of passport issues. She returned to Iraqi Kurdistan to continue her work with the Christian Peacemakers Team and to join her husband, Mohammad, and their family.

When Jess came back to Des Moines, she brought Monty "Hollywood," a friend and fellow pipeline activist. Along with being a great support for Jess, Monty was a great help for the community! Monty is a man of many talents. He boasts plumbing, carpentry and electrical skills, and he is a world-class chef! While here, he cooked many good meals for our guests, rehabilitated a second floor Dingman House bathroom, and lined up a contractor to lay a new sewage line for the Berrigan and Rachel Corrie Houses.

I want to really thank the two youngest members of this past year's pandemic community, Jenny Rodrigues Santos and Lily Kirsch. Both are Grinnell College students who continued their studies remotely and fully engaged in the work here. No small thing for anyone, much less two 20 year olds! They did a great job for us, and while they have returned to Grinnell this semester for in-person classes, we expect to stay connected with them this fall and see them at the houses soon!

The two newest members to our community are Frieda Be-

queaith and Jean Riehm. Frieda comes to us from our local Des Moines Mutual Aid and Des Moines Street Medic collectives. They are living at Berrigan House and are a big reason why this issue of the *via pacis* is getting out! Many thanks for their help with the editing and layout, I hope they stick around! Jean came to us in the summer through acquaintance with current community members and brings a lot of gifts to our community. They can cook and love serving our guests. Jean also brings a unique religious faith into our community circle. They are what I call a "Nordic-something." Soon after Jean moved in, they asked to join the community.

Jean joins Austin Cook as one of our two Des Moines Catholic Worker "want-to-be's." Austin has been with us from the beginning of the pandemic. He has so much empathy for our guests and energy to serve, a natural at the work. Austin and I share a common conversion story. We are both "Jesus freaks." Austin sought us out as a community trying to live the Gospel values he learned at Moody Bible College. His generous giving spirit is a gift to us all. Along with all the other duties, tasks, and jobs he does for the community, he joins Norman, Eddie, and me in prayer five days a week.

I turned seventy in February. You know you're old when you've lived most of your adult life in a previous century that ended over twenty years ago! The most remarkable thing about turning seventy in this community is that I am not alone. Norman and Eddie are in their seventies too! When you add up all of the years we've been together at the Des Moines Catholic Worker, it comes to 110 years. Incredible!

Norman is retired and in need of assisted living, which we are committed to doing ourselves at Manning House. Ed and I take our share of shifts cooking at Dingman House. Eddie mops and cleans the first floor of Dingman after every shift, and he writes the community's "thank you's" to donors. With the help of Mary Ann Koch, I pay the bills and do a lot of begging for stuff that we need to keep feeding folks and maintaining our four old, always-in-need-of-repair, houses.

We old folks do two other very important things: vigil and prayer!

For over a year, Norman, Ed, and I have joined a regular clergy-led vigil in support of Black Liberation in front of the Des Moines Police Department station, which happens at noon every weekday. We also began a vigil every Saturday at 4 p.m. for an hour at our Iowa Air Guard's Drone Command Center. We are really grateful for our fellow vigilers and the small number of loyal clergy who show up every week. More people are needed, come join us!

We also pray five days a week at Manning House. We read the daily mass scriptures, reflect on them, and then pray for our needs and for each person living in our four Catholic Worker houses by name. We end with the "Our Father" at 7 a.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. on Saturdays, when we also do a Eucharist of sorts.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I wrote, "Does Anyone Know What Time It Is?" Here at the Des Moines Catholic Worker, the collective 110 years of living experience of Norman, Eddie, and me in the last 45 years is also a measure of time.

The story of the Transfiguration is in three Gospels; Mathew, Mark and Luke. In all three accounts, Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus to make Jesus look good for his disciples. I'm no Jesus, for sure, but I do know that living with Norman and Eddie this many years has always made me look good.

I also know that the Des Moines Catholic Worker community needs to transition from us old folks to a younger crowd. Pray that God sends us the folks we need to keep this place going, and help us older folks get out of the way.

Des Moines Catholic Worker
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The voice of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Prayers . . . without them, nothing happens.

Special COVID-19 Donation Requests: We are constantly in need of clamshell to-go containers, plastic forks, nitrile gloves, and to-go coffee cups for our pandemic-era window service!

VOLUNTEERS:

Individuals and work crews for hospitality (serving food, cleanup), cleaning and general inside and outside maintenance . . . without them, we burn out.

FOOD:

Fruit, Vegetables, Meat and Fish, Milk, Cheese, Salted Butter, Olive Oil, Sugar, Coffee, Creamer, Juice (sugar free), Salt, Black Pepper, Fresh Garlic, Salad dressing, Soups and Stews (both canned and fresh). Leftovers from weddings, funerals and other social gatherings . . .

MEAL PROVIDERS:

Provide a meal for 100 people once a month! Call or email for current openings: **515-214-1030, dmccatholicworker@gmail.com**

HEALTH AND

HYGIENE:

Menstrual Hygiene Items, Diapers, Baby Formula, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Multivitamins, Antibiotic Ointment, Band-Aids, Lip balm

TOILETRIES:

Disposable Razors, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion, Deodorant, Soap, Toothpaste (Small sizes preferred for handout), Toothbrushes and Toilet Paper.

NEEDED CLOTHING:

Underwear, Socks, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Hoodies, Coats, Work Pants. (All Sizes, Especially Big) Sleeping Bags, Blankets

HOUSEHOLD

SUPPLIES:

Bleach, Laundry Detergent, Environmentally-Friendly Dish Soap, Murphy’s Oil Soap, Pinesol, Trash Bags, Brooms, Rugs, Candles, Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs, Aluminum Foil, Plastic Wrap, Sandwich and Freezer Bags, Bath Towels, Playing Cards, Candles, Phone Chargers

HOUSE REPAIRS:

With four old houses, there are plenty of projects large and small. We invite do-it-yourself-ers--individuals or groups--with skills in carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical, etc. to come in, look over our housing needs, and choose a project. Bring your own tools if possible.

LIBRARY:

Peace and Justice books for the Berrigan House Library

\$CASH MONEY\$:

Cash donations are essential to pay our property taxes, utilities, repair and maintenance of property, upkeep and gas for two vans, purchase of needed supplies, our community gardening and for the continued publication and mailing of the *via pacis*, a good twenty percent of our annual expenses.

DMCW WEBSITE

Our website has recently been redone! Please visit us at www.desmoinescatholicworker.com. You can also visit www.viapacis.wordpress.com for an online version of the *via pacis*.



Annie is back and so is the *via pacis*!